

## Message Text

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PAGE 01 ROME 05106 281754Z  
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 AF-08 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01  
INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02  
SS-15 USIA-06 DHA-02 /068 W  
-----290233Z 011753 /62

R 281655Z MAR 77  
FM AMEMBASSY ROME  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3641  
INFO AMEMBASSY KINSHASA  
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

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FROM AMBASSADOR LODGE'S OFFICE

E.O. 11652: N/A  
TAGS: PFOR, PINR, CF, BE, VT  
SUBJECT: CONGO - ASSASSINATION OF CARDINAL

REF: ROME 4911

BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED

1. IN DRAMATIC CONCILIATORY MOVE FOLLOWING MARCH 22 ASSASSINATION OF CARDINAL BIAYENDA, GOVERNMENT OF PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO SENT ITS AMBASSADOR TO FRANCE TO VATICAN MARCH 25 TO DELIVER LETTER TO POPE FROM THE "MILITARY PARTY COMMAND."

2. ACCORDING TO EXCERPTS PUBLISHED IN VATICAN'S L'OSSERVATORE ROMANO MARCH 27, THE LETTER:

-- CONVEYS NGUESSO'S "PROFOUND PAIN AT THE TRAGIC LOSS OF AN ILLUSTRIOUS SON OF THE CHRISTIAN FAMILY";  
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-- DENOUNCES WITHOUT EQUIVOCATION AND WITH MAXIMUM ENERGY "THE GRAVE CRIME,"

-- GIVES NOTICE THAT CULPRIT HAD BEEN ARRESTED AND WILL BE PUNISHED "IN EXEMPLARY MANNER," AND

-- EXTOLS THE VIRTUES OF CARDINAL AS  
"GREAT PATRIOT", WHO PREACHED TOLERANCE  
AND CONCORD.

3. LETTER WAS ACCEPTED BY CARDINAL SECRETARY VILLOT,  
WHO ASKED THE AMBASSADOR TO TRANSMIT THE POPE'S  
EXPRESSION OF THANKFUL APPRECIATION FOR THE MESSAGE.

END UNCLASSIFIED

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4. COMMENT: VATICAN VIEWS GESTURE AS INDICATING:  
(1) WISH CONTINUE RAPPROBEMENT WITH VATICAN WHICH  
WAS ENVISIONED IN AGREEMENT ANNOUNCED JANUARY 31 TO  
ESTABLISH FULL DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS AND (2) INTENTION  
TO CONTINUE COEXISTENCE BETWEEN CHURCH AND MARXIST REGIME  
ALONG THE LINE ESTABLISHED BY THE LATE CARDINAL.  
CARDINAL BIAYENDA IS CREDITED WITH SUCCESS IN  
MITIGATING HARSH PERSECUTION OF CHURCH WHICH LASTED  
FROM 1963 TO 1970. ALTHOUGH CARDINAL WAS NOT ABLE  
TO HAVE THE REGIME RESTORE TO CHURCH ITS SCHOOLS,  
HOSPITALS AND WELFARE ENTITIES, HE WAS ABLE THROUGH  
HIS UNDERSTANDINGS WITH N'GOUABI TO PRESERVE THE  
CHURCH'S FREEDOM IN STRICTLY RELIGIOUS MATTERS AND  
TO PERMIT RE-ENTRY OF FOREIGN MISSIONARIES INTO  
THE CONGO. GARDNER

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NNN

## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptoning:** X  
**Capture Date:** 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** CONDOLENCE MESSAGES, DIPLOMATIC COMMUNICATIONS, DEATHS, RELIGIOUS LEADERS  
**Control Number:** n/a  
**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Sent Date:** 28-Mar-1977 12:00:00 am  
**Decapton Date:** 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am  
**Decapton Note:**  
**Disposition Action:** RELEASED  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 22 May 2009  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
**Disposition Reason:**  
**Disposition Remarks:**  
**Document Number:** 1977ROME05106  
**Document Source:** CORE  
**Document Unique ID:** 00  
**Drafter:** n/a  
**Enclosure:** n/a  
**Executive Order:** N/A  
**Errors:** N/A  
**Expiration:**  
**Film Number:** D770106-0739  
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**Litigation History:**  
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**Message ID:** d367a1b0-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc  
**Office:** ACTION EUR  
**Original Classification:** LIMITED OFFICIAL USE  
**Original Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Original Previous Classification:** n/a  
**Original Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Page Count:** 2  
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**Previous Classification:** LIMITED OFFICIAL USE  
**Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Reference:** 77 ROME 4911  
**Retention:** 0  
**Review Action:** RELEASED, APPROVED  
**Review Content Flags:**  
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**Review Event:**  
**Review Exemptions:** n/a  
**Review Media Identifier:**  
**Review Release Date:** n/a  
**Review Release Event:** n/a  
**Review Transfer Date:**  
**Review Withdrawn Fields:** n/a  
**SAS ID:** 2976128  
**Secure:** OPEN  
**Status:** NATIVE  
**Subject:** CONGO - ASSASSINATION OF CARDINAL  
**TAGS:** PFOR, PINR, CF, BE, VT, (BIAYENDA, EMILE CARDINAL)  
**To:** STATE  
**Type:** TE  
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**Review Markings:**  
Margaret P. Grafeld  
Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
22 May 2009  
**Markings:** Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009